

Formosa Trainee's 2d Crash

U-2 Pilot Can't Keep a Secret

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WASHINGTON.

This is the sad story of Shih Hi-sheng, the Chinese U-2 pilot who has single-handedly put the United States Air Force and the State Department right into the egg-drop soup.

Last Aug. 14, the 28-year-old Chinese Nationalist pilot crashed his U-2 near Boise, Idaho, while on a training flight. Capt. Shih parachuted to safety, but the accident embarrassingly revealed to the general public a tightly held secret namely, that Chinese pilots from Formosa were being trained in this country to fly U-2 spy planes.

Yesterday, a Chinese Nationalist pilot crashed another U-2 in the desert near Tucson, Ariz., but parachuted to safety. Who was it? Shih Hi-sheng.

Each U-2 costs about \$4 million.

The pilot was identified by the Air Force as a member of the 2080th Strategic Wing of the Strategic Air Command and one of a group of Chinese Nationalists undergoing U-2 training at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tucson.

Col. Edward Jewett, base information officer, said that Capt. Shih was rescued by an Air Force helicopter minutes after the plane crashed and burned. He was picked up about six miles south of the base in the desert near Benson Highway and taken to the base hospital for observation.

It was Col. Jewett who revealed that Capt. Shih was the same pilot who ditched the U-2 in Idaho last August. The two incidents focused

the spotlight on the highly secret training program, which is about the last thing that either the Air Force or the State Department wants. In a minor way, the crashes amount to a sort of Chinese version of the Francis Gary Powers U-2 case.

So secret was the program, that until Capt. Shih's first crash, even the Mayor and other residents of Tucson were unaware of the Chinese pilots in their midst.

Mr. Powers, piloting a U-2 for the Central Intelligence Agency, crashed deep inside the Soviet Union May 1, 1960. The big summit meeting in Paris collapsed in the wake

of the uproar over the reconnaissance plane. The U. S. called off flights over Russia.

On Sept. 9, 1962, however, Communist China claimed to have shot down an American-made U-2 flying over its territory for Nationalist China. The Nationalist government confirmed that it had U-2's, and that one was missing on a "routine reconnaissance mission."

The State Department then announced that the Nationalists had purchased two U-2s from Lockheed Aircraft Co. in July, 1960. A department spokesman said that no Chinese U-2 pilots had been trained in this country since 1960, however.

That is where matters stood until Capt. Shih ditched his plane in Idaho four months ago and the Pentagon confirmed that Chinese U-2 pilots were being trained at Davis-Monthan.

It is all a very delicate subject, of course, since the Chinese pilots trained here presumably go home and fly U-2 missions over the mainland. Communist China claims to have downed three

U-2 since 1958, the last on July 7.

The Air Force confirmed yesterday that the Chinese U-2 training program was still going on at Tucson, but a spokesman here declined to say how many pilots have been or are being trained, how long the program has been underway and how many U-2's the Nationalist government has.

"They are being trained to fly Chinese Nationalist planes," was all he would say. At SAC headquarters in Omaha, a spokesman declared: "Everything available to us on this program is classified. I can't say a thing."